

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 01920 151959Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
IO-13 AF-10 TRSE-00 /084 W
-----124399 160647Z /13

R 151655Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5060
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONS*L OPORTO 2148
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGARA

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
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47:? --/CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
COMUSFORAZ LAJES FLD AZ
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1920

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJECT: EANES HITS SEPARATISTS

REF: (A) LISBON 1385 (DTG 231655Z FEB 78) (NOTAL),
(B) LISBON 1368 (DTG 231139Z FEB 78)

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PAGE 02 LISBON 01920 151959Z

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT EANES SWORE IN COMMAJDER ALMEIDA E
COSTA MARCH 14 AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION
FOR MADEIRA AND THE AZORES. AT THE CEREMONY, EANES
CONDEMNED SEPARATISTS AS WILLING TO SACRIFICE REGIONAL
INTERESTS TO EXTERNAL ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS.
END SUMMARY.

1. ALMEIDA E COSTA TAKES OFFICE: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER COMMANDER ALMEIDA E COSTA WAS SWORN IN MARCH 14 AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONS. THE CONSTITUTION AUTHORIZES THE COMMISSION TO OPERATE ATTACHED TO THE PRESIDENCY AND TO ISSUE OPINIONS UPON REQUEST ASSEMBLIES ON THE LEGALITY OF REGIONAL LAWS AND THE CONFORMITY OF NATIONAL ACTS WITH REGIONAL RIGHTS. THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION HAS NOT FUNCTIONED UNTIL NOW, AND STILL LACKS FOUR ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES.

2. EANES HITS SEPARATISTS: EANES USED THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN TO:
-- CALL THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION'S FUNCTIONS DECISIVE FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE REGIONAL AUTONOMY;
-- BLAME DIFFICULTIES IN THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS ON THE INERTIA AND INEFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION;
-- ACCUSE SEPARATISTS OF SACRIFICING REGIONAL CONCERNS TO OUTSIDE ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS (READ QADHAFI AND THE SOVIETS) (REF A).

3. AZOREAN REACTIONS: MADEIRAN REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED THE CEREMONY, BUT AZOREAN REPRESENTATIVES WERE NOTABLY ABSENT, REPORTEDLY DUE TO FLIGHT DELAYS. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LISBON 01920 151959Z

OFFICIAL REGIONAL REACTION AS YET. BUT AZOREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, DURING A RECENT VISIT OF ALMEIDA E COSTA TO THE AZORES, EXPRESSED THEIR SKEPTICISM TO AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA AND EMBOFF REGARDING THE BENEFITS TO THE AZOREANS OF A SUCH AN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION. MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO HAS TOLD US THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION WOULD BE USED TO GIVE A BASIS FOR VETOING REGIONAL LAWS WHICH WERE ILLEGAL, BUT NOT UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

4. COMMENT: THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS EXPLOITED INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL GAPS TO TEST THE LIMITS OF AUTONOMY (REF B). THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION COULD CLOSE SOME OF THESE LOOPHOLES. PRESIDENT EANES' TOUGH STATEMENT PUTS ALL CONCERNED ON NOTICE THAT PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES WILL BROOK NO NONSENSE FROM SEPARATISTS.
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, SPEECHES, DISSIDENT FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LISBON01920
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780116-0905
Format: TEL
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780366/aaaacebd.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6d54cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LISBON 1385, 78 LISBON 1368
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3326392
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EANES HITS SEPARATISTS
TAGS: PINT, PO, (EANES, ANTONIO DOS SANTOS RAMALHO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6d54cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014